3:Evans-Pritchard E-4, 5 (1942-1944) 1949 MT9 Libyan Bedouin MT9
(1837-1942) Sanusi

charge the enemy, who was armed with the most modern equipment and generally entrenched. They charged on horseback, firing wildly, wherever they might come across him, without any regard to danger, terrain, or odds. The Turkish officers had great difficulty in the early days of the campaign in restraining these impetuous cavaliers, but Turkish tact, the example of the disciplined Turkish troops, and the disastrous results of their own impetuosity soon taught them to act with greater caution, though not the patience necessary in the professional soldier. Realizing that the war might be protracted, Enver tried to make the Bedouin volunteers feel that they were as much part of the army of resistance as the Turkish regulars and to give them some military training, in however random a fashion. He chose 300 young Bedouin of the principal families of tribal Shaikhs from among the volunteers and gave them training at his camp at al-Zahir al-Ahmar, some 20 km. to the south-west of Darna. They were given arms and uniforms sent from Turkey, were housed in Turkish army tents, and received Turkish pay. This small Bedouin contingent, trained under Turkish regular officers and N.C.O.'s, took part in the fighting in 1912 and proved to be a valuable adjunct to the slender Turkish forces. When trained some of them were put in charge of the training of the *Mahafiziya*, the Bedouin irregulars, of whom there were about 2,000 at Enver's camp. Besides the irregulars, who resided on and off at the Turkish camp, all the Bedouin for many miles round could be relied on to join in the fray whenever the Italians ventured to move from entrenched and fortified positions. Most of the Bedouin were armed, but their rifles were of a very old make, mostly old one-round Greek pieces. When Enver received his irregular and scanty supplies from Turkey he distributed a small number of Turkish rifles among them. Later they equipped themselves with Italian rifles taken in fights, and they had a ready source of ammunition in every Italian column. The irregulars occasionally received largesse from Enver but for the most part paid themselves in loot.

Enver looked yet farther ahead. In June 1912 he selected 365 boys, mostly from among the sons of the Bedouin Shaikhs, and sent them to Istanbul to be educated for posts in the Cyrenaican army and administration. The first thirty to be

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(1837-1942) Sanusi

*175 *648 • 702 commissioned were later sent to al-Sallum to join Sayyid Ahmad al-Sharif before the outbreak of war in Europe in 1914. Six months later another seven were sent to Cyrenaica but were captured *en route* by a French warship. Many of these lads later distinguished themselves in Asia Minor in the wars there which followed the 1914–1918 war in Europe, and remained in Turkey for good.

IV

*175 *648 The Italian plan in Cyrenaica was to advance simultaneously from Banghazi in the west and Darna in the east, gripping the central plateau between pincer columns and bringing the enemy to decisive engagements. In the Banghazi zone a column advanced on 28 November 1911 on the suburbs of Sidi Khalifa and al-Kwaifiya. But the Italian forces in and around Banghazi still only had superiority within the range of their naval guns. They were on the defensive and the Turco-Arab force at Banina had the initiative. On 12 March 1912 the Turco-Arabs made a big general attack on Banghazi. This was a blunder which cost them dear. The official Italian account says that they left about 1,000 corpses on the field; but it must be said here, and in reference to all reports of enemy forces and casualties quoted elsewhere in this book, that Italian figures must be treated with reserve. The occupation of Banghazi was now extended to about 8 km. around the town and fortified on that arc. While the Italians sat behind these fortifications at Banghazi with the Turco-Arab force besieging them from Banina, the progress made in the Darna sector was even more disappointing. The town is backed almost immediately by the plateau to which access is difficult owing to the steepness of the incline. Finding the terrain too difficult for an offensive, the Italians remained in the town, with the country around it in undisputed control of their enemies. The fighting which took place on the periphery of the Italian defences was a struggle for control of the Wadi Darna, which supplies the town with most of its water. On the night of 11 to 12 February, Enver Bey launched an attack on the town, but failed to take it, and by July a new girdle of defensive works had been thrown around it, within which the Italians continued to be besieged by the Turco-Arabs, estimated at 8,000 to 12,000 armed men. On 17 September took place a